

M E M O R A N D U M

NOVEMBER 29, 1990

TO: Boston Redevelopment Authority and
Stephen Coyle, Director

FROM: Linda Bourque, Assistant Director for
Neighborhood Planning and Zoning
Cindy Wall, Senior Planner
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SUBJECT: Standards to be employed by the Boston Redevelopment
Authority in conducting site plan review under Article
29, Greenbelt Protection Overlay District.

EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY: The Boston Redevelopment Authority instructed staff to develop standards for site plan review under Article 29, the Greenbelt Protection Overlay District. Staff now recommends the adoption of standards and procedures.

The Greenbelt Protection Overlay District (GPOD) became effective on June 1, 1987. Its purposes are to preserve and protect the amenities of the City of Boston; to preserve and enhance air quality by protecting the supply of vegetation and open space; to protect the City's Greenbelt Roadways from traffic congestion and to abate serious and present traffic concerns. Nine scenic roadways have been officially designated as Greenbelt Protection Overlay Districts, including the Jamaica Way and the Arborway, West Roxbury Parkway, VFW Parkway, Turtle Pond Parkway, Enneking Parkway, Dedham Parkway, American Legion Highway, and Day Boulevard..

Article 29 establishes general requirements and procedures, specific submission requirements, and general standards with which a proposed project must comply in order to receive approval for a conditional use permit under the GPOD.

Subsequently, the Boston Redevelopment Authority instructed staff to develop standards for site plan review to be enforced administratively as more specific guides to site plan reviews conducted under the GPOD. Staff now recommends adoption of these standards and procedures.

Standards include general provisions and address the issues of site planning, design and height, materials, transportation access, and parking and loading, and are contained in Appendix A.

The standards work to ensure reasonable use of the site permitted by the Zoning Code in concert with the protection of the features and qualities of the Greenbelt Roadways. Specific requirements include contextual landscaping, design, and facade treatment,

with emphasis on appropriate exterior building materials. Other standards require safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access designed to have no significant adverse impacts on the Greenbelt Roadways, and off-street parking to be screened and limited in size. The procedures call for final approval by the BRA Board of site plans or design review plans within a GPOD.

The neighborhood IPODs establish Boulevard Planning Districts (BPD) as interim controls to preserve and protect the integrity of the community's arterials. The proposed GPOD standards are supportive of the goals and intent of this planning concept and are appropriate final zoning for many of these boulevards.

The Allston-Brighton PZAC has proposed the designation of Commonwealth Avenue, as a GPOD. Without these standards, as detailed in Appendix A, inappropriate development could adversely impact the integrity of this GPOD.

In addition, the scenic resources of the regional open space network, such as the Charles River Reservation, would be irreversibly altered by incompatible construction on abutting neighborhood gateways such as Soldiers Field Road and Nonantum Road.

The standards and procedures for site plan review are currently under review by the West Roxbury Community, since a majority of the designated Greenbelt Roadways are in this neighborhood. Additional recommendations from the community maybe incorporated at a later date.

Staff believes these standards and procedures are appropriate for site plan reviews conducted under Article 29 and that they will create a review process that is predictable and consistent, as well as flexible enough to suit specific situations.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That the Director is authorized to implement the Standards and Procedures for Site Plan Review under Article 29, Greenbelt Protection Overlay District, (GPOD), in substantial accord with those recommended in the Board Memorandum of November 29, 1990. These standards and procedures serve to further the purposes of the GPOD and to develop consistency in the review of development proposals subject to the GPOD.

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Standards and Procedures for Site Plan Review

Under Article 29

Greenbelt Protection Overlay District

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of the Greenbelt Protection Overlay District ("GPOD") regulations, as set forth in Article 29 of the Boston Zoning Code ("Code"), are to regulate development so as to preserve and protect the character of Boston's greenbelt roadways which are among the natural scenic resources for which Boston is known; to protect and retain for posterity the air quality, supply of vegetation, natural features, and open space; to assure that development proposals are sensitive to and contextual with the character of the greenbelt roadways; to maintain the safe and free flow of traffic along these scenic roadways; and to develop consistency in the review of development proposals subject to the GPOD regulations.

I. In considering a site plan and landscape plan for a Proposed Project subject to Article 29 and in preparing its recommendation to the Board of Appeal, the Boston Redevelopment Authority shall assure that the following standards are met to the extent practicable and are consistent with a reasonable use of the site permitted by the Code.

1. Siting

- a. The Proposed Project shall be sited and landscaped so as to result in maximum preservation of and minimum interference with natural features, landscaping, open space, and scenic resources on and adjacent to the site. Particular attention shall be given to the preservation and enhancement of the features and qualities of the Greenbelt Roadway protected by the subject GPOD.

The foregoing standards shall be applicable throughout the site preparation, construction, and operation phases of the Proposed Project.

- b. The Proposed Project shall be sited and landscaped so as to be sensitive to and contextual with the character of the Greenbelt Roadway.
- c. The Proposed Project shall be sited and landscaped so as to screen and protect adjoining premises from any adverse impacts of uses on the site.

2. Massing, Design and Height

- a. Massing, design, and facade treatment of the buildings on the site shall be sensitive to and contextual with the character of the Greenbelt Roadway and of surrounding structures and landscaping.
- b. Massing and design of the Proposed Project shall be such as to maintain the maximum possible setback from the Greenbelt Roadway. To the extent possible, major building elements shall be located on that portion of the site, if any, outside of the GPOD.
- c. Massing, design and height shall be selected from among those practicable alternatives which avoid an intensity of usage which would have a significant adverse impact on the character of the Greenbelt Roadway.
- d. Height shall be in accordance with applicable height limits for the site as set forth in the Code.

3. Materials

- a. Materials used on the exteriors of buildings and structures shall be compatible with the natural features of the Greenbelt Roadway as well as the surrounding properties.

4. Access

- a. Access shall be adequate to accommodate safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian entrance to and exit from the site, and movement within the site.
- b. Entrances, exits, driveways, roadways, and lot frontage shall be adequate to permit practical access by fire, police, and emergency vehicles and to carry the traffic expected to be generated by the Proposed Project.
- c. Access shall be designed in such a way as to cause no significant adverse impacts on the safe and continuous flow of traffic and on parking on the Greenbelt Roadway.

5. Parking and Loading

- a. All off-street parking and loading facilities

shall be sited and designed so as to have no significant adverse impact on traffic and parking on the Greenbelt Roadway and adjacent streets.

- b. All off-street parking areas shall be limited in size so as to create no significant adverse impact on traffic on the Greenbelt Roadway and adjacent streets.
- c. All off-street parking areas and impervious surfaces shall be designed and sited in such a way as to be screened from the Greenbelt Roadway and from adjacent properties.
- d. Parking shall be provided according to the requirements of the Code and shall be sited in such a way as to minimize parking congestion and to maximize safe and convenient access to parking on or off site.
- e. Off-street loading space shall be adequate for the off-street loading and unloading needs incidental to the normal operation of the use(s) on the site.

II. In conducting site plan review under Article 29, the following procedures shall be applicable:

- 1. Submissions shall be made according to the provisions of Article 29, Section 29-5.
- 2. The BRA may, after conducting site plan review, and in making its recommendation to the Board of Appeal:
 - a. recommend approval of the requested conditional use permit;
 - b. reject on of an appeal due to incomplete submissions;
 - b. recommend the imposition of reasonable conditions; and
 - c. recommend denial of any proposal which is overly intrusive on or otherwise detrimental to the Greenbelt Roadway.
- 3. No site plan review approval or final design review approval by the BRA shall issue on a Proposed Project except after review and by vote of the Board of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.
- 4. The BRA may, in conducting design review as approved by the Board of Appeal, reject proposals which are not consistent with a site plan previously approved by the BRA.

